

signifies *baleful*. But this is not true; *baleful* properly signifies *pernicious*; *mournful* does not.

*Rabid* and *raging* are given as synonymous; but although we hear of a *raging* tempest, who ever heard of a *rabid* tempest?

*Chase* and *drive* are given as synonymous; but does a farmer *chase* his team? Does a coachman *chase* his horses? Does a carpenter *chase* nails?

Who, without the book before him, could believe that any man should give *spontaneous* and *voluntary* as synonymous? One moment's reflection would suggest to any man of ordinary mind, that *voluntary* always implies the *will* of an intelligent agent, and that *spontaneous* growth and *spontaneous* combustion have no reference to the *will* of any being.

I am astonished at the success of incompetent compilers of books and active booksellers in urging into schools these and many other books which are worse than useless.

*Truth* is the object of instruction; and it is better to teach nothing than to teach what is not true. I am told that these books in the Eastern States have been utterly rejected.

MONITOR.

## Miscellaneous.

For the New-York Observer.

### QUACKERY IN SCHOOL BOOKS.

We frequently see statistics of schools, their number, and the amount of money expended in supporting them. But how little attention is given to the character of the books used in the common schools. From observations made during several years past, I am convinced that incompetent men who make books for schools, and illiterate men who urge them into use, are multiplying the errors and imperfections of class books, particularly of those which are intended for instruction in our native language. Some of the errors are copied from English books; others originate with compilers in this country.

Among the impositions practised on our citizens in the publication of an *Inductive* Grammar, now called *Productive*. But there is not and can not be any such thing. There is no induction in Grammar, none in Geography. All grammar and all geography rest on *facts*, without reasoning from premises.

But the most extraordinary examples of incorrect books offered for the use of schools, are the defining spelling books, intended to teach significations by synonyms, and to teach spelling and definition at the same time. The plan of these books is this. Two or three words are printed on the same line, and these words are to be used to define each other; as the pupil is directed to read the line from the left to the right, or from the right to the left. Thus we may read "adder is a serpent, or serpent is an adder;" "artifice, stratagem, deception, or deception, stratagem, artifice." In these examples we are to admit the words to have the same meaning. But how obviously false does the first definition become by inverting the order of words. An adder is a serpent indeed; every adder is a serpent; but every serpent is not an adder. An adder is one species, and a serpent is every species.

As to the other definition, it is not true; deception is not artifice or stratagem; but may be the effect of either.

In one of these books *guile* and *craft* are given as synonymous. If this was true, the declaration of Demetrius, in Acts xix., might have been in these words: "By this *guile* we have our wealth."

The first words in these defining tables, in Sanders' Spelling Book, are *baleful*, *mournful*; that is, *baleful* signifies *mournful*, and *mournful* sig-